

JLC Position Paper

**FULLY FUND THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES BUDGET AND  
STRATEGIC PLAN AS OUTLINED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 19**

1. **ISSUE:** To provide the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) with the resources required to deploy Phases II and III of the TurboVet System, a simple, complete, and secure web-based tool that facilitates the development and filing of veterans disability claims.
  
2. **BACKGROUND:**
  - 730,000 veterans in Virginia
    - 106,000+ currently receiving VA disability benefits
    - \$1.2 billion in FFY07
  - Current DVS IT solutions and human resources have reached capacity
    - Due to the immense amount of information to learn, there is a long time period for new Veterans Service Representatives (VSRs) to become fully proficient
    - Because many DVS offices are one-deep operations, it is also difficult to leverage knowledge of senior VSRs
    - DVS currently uses an internally-developed Microsoft Access application called Representatives' Veterans Database (RVD) which is limited in its capability to handle the completion and management of VA and non-VA forms and thus limits the number of veterans DVS staff can serve in one day
  - Bureaucratic Process Complexity
    - CFR 38 governs administration of veterans' benefits and services. Like the tax code it is extremely complex
    - It takes three to five years for a VSR to be trained and become proficient in all areas of the Code
    - For a veteran trying to represent himself, in most cases it is nearly impossible to decipher the laws and regulations
  - Institutional Knowledge Erosion
    - DVS is facing a shrinking pool of skilled workers
    - The institutional knowledge is leaving faster that it can be replaced
  
3. **DISCUSSION:**
  - Phase I (concept development) is complete
  - Phase II will:
    - Replace the Department's existing business application – RVD
    - Consolidate all current disparate data into a single web-based database
    - Advance the development of the intelligent user interface (IUI) into additional claims application processes to further assist VSR productivity
  - Phase III will:
    - Continue the development of the IUI into even more claims application processes thus further increasing VSR productivity
    - Begin deployment of the self-service model to allow veterans the ability to develop simpler claims on their own using the IUI
    - Begin creating the mechanism through which other state agencies and DVS can share appropriate veteran data to expedite service delivery to the veteran

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- Begin developing the mechanism for electronic claims filing with the VA
  - Phase IV will:
    - Complete the development of the IUI
    - Continue the deployment of the self-service model into increasingly complex claims available for the veteran to develop on their own
    - Continue the development for veteran data sharing between state agencies
    - Continue developing the electronic claims filing process with VA
  - Benefits of TurboVet
    - Secure system
    - Faster claims submission
    - Improved accuracy and completeness of claims
  - Expected results
    - More claims submitted
    - Faster ratings decisions from the VA
    - Increase in the percentage of approved claims
    - Increased economic benefit to Virginia's veterans: up to \$200 million per year
4. **RECOMMENDATION:** That the Governor and General Assembly appropriate \$300,000 to deploy Phase II and \$900,000 to deploy Phase III of the TurboVet System, a simple, complete, and secure web-based tool that facilitates the development and filing of veterans disability claims.